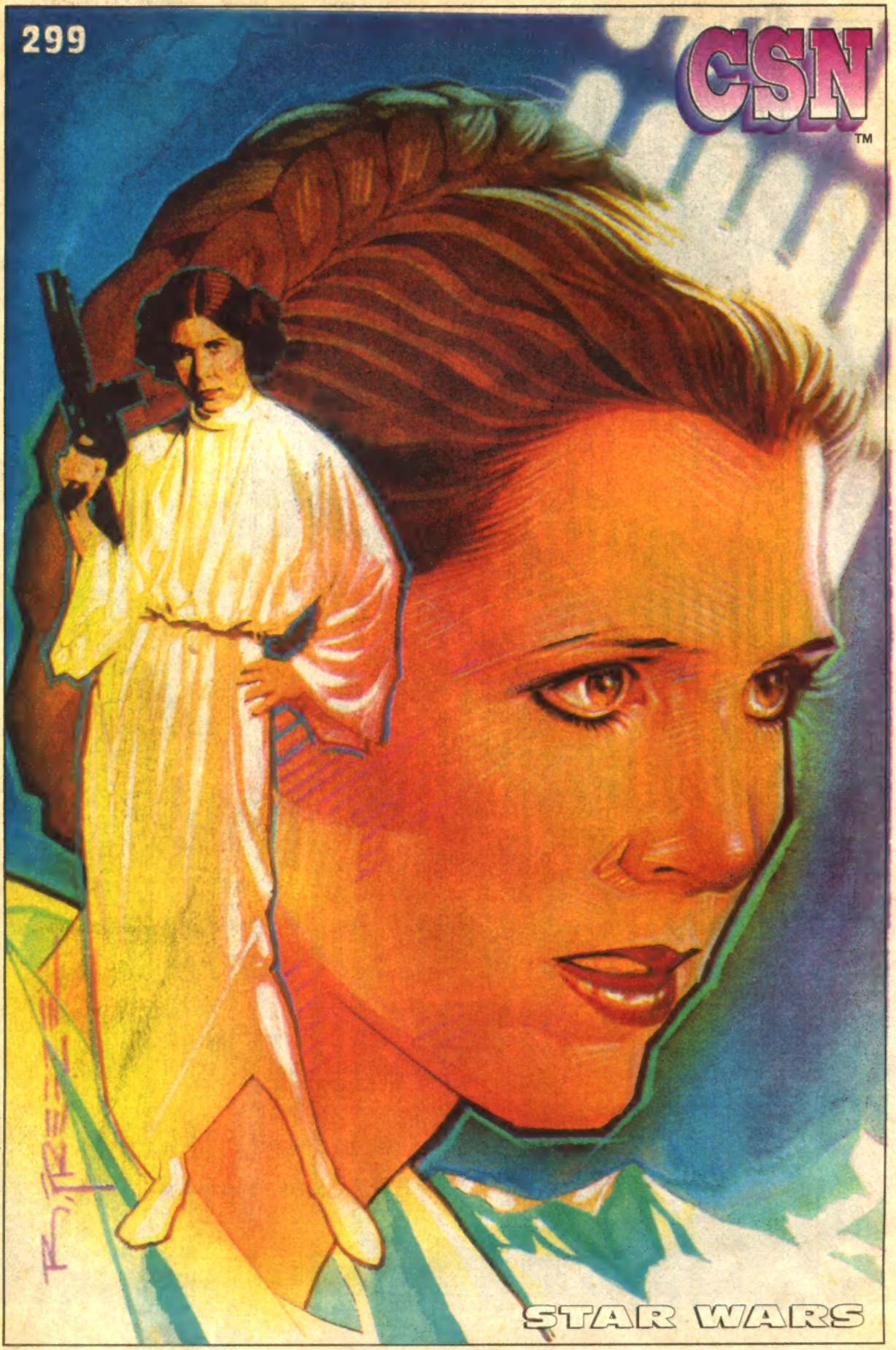

Star Wars ™&©1992 Lucasfilms, ARR.

These Genes Are Extremely Durable

The Punisher and Spider-Man have a lot in common: they both want to stop criminals, to protect the innocent, and to make the world a better place for everyone but the lawbreakers. Their methods, though, are quite different; in Spider-Man's eyes, the Punisher is a brutal, hard-edged crimefighter who is almost as dangerous as the criminals he fights.

But the Punisher starts to look almost mundane in comparison to Sabretooth, the X-Men's deadly nemesis.

In ***Designer Genes***, writer Terry Kavanagh and artists Scott McDaniel and Keith Williams send Spider-Man and the Punisher on the trail of a group of genetic engineers who have hope to implement a diabolical plan that threatens everyone. The genetic engineers have apparently enlisted some heavy-duty protection, though, in the person of Sabretooth, who apparently is helping them to carry out their plan. Or is he?...

Spider-Man/Punisher/Sabretooth: Designer Genes pits two of Marvel's most popular heroes against one of their most notorious superfoes. The 64-page prestige-format oneshot features a foil-embossed cover (as if it needed any enhancement to attract fan attention!). Scheduled for April 28th release, ***Designer Genes*** is priced at $8.95.

Two of the characters who star in this one-shot will also be prominently featured on May-release posters from Marvel. ***Wolverine Vs. Sabretooth*** pits Logan against his feral adversary in a poster that will also serve as a lead-in for the upcoming Sabretooth limited series; the poster is illustrated by Joe Chiodo. ***Carnage Vs. Spider-Man Vs. Venom*** features Spider-Man against two of his most popular villains, courtesy of Mark Bagley and Randy Emberlin. Both $4.95 posters are scheduled for May 13th release.

by Wayne Lee

A Wasted Mind Is a Terrible Thing

Christopher Grahame is a writer whose fertile imagination has created marvelous children's books; now, though, Grahame's thoughts are tinged with dementia, and the imagination that once created such lovely images for children is creating far more nightmarish images. His beautiful world is turning warlike; his land of wonder has become a ***Kingdom of the Wicked.***

KINGDOM of the WICKED

Kingdom of the Wicked, a new two-issue limited series from Atomeka, is described by the publisher as "a disturbing tale of madness and the supernatural somewhere between Stephen King and Lewis Carroll." Written by *Ian Edginton* and illustrated by *D'Israeli*, ***Kingdom of the Wicked #1*** is a 48-page full-color comic; look for it in late March.

The Empire Is Foiled Again In Star Wars Trading Cards Set

It's been a decade now since the last ***Star Wars*** film aired, and yet the series still has a tremendous following. The recent trilogy of ***Star Wars*** novels by Timothy Zahn (the third will debut in a matter of weeks) has been phenomenally successful in both hardcover and paperback; the comic book series from Dark Horse has been an overwhelming success. And now Topps has a new item to add to that essential Star Wars collection: the ***Star Wars Galaxy Premium Trading Card Set***.

"This is an elaborately conceived, first-class project all the way," Gary Gerani, series editor, said. While Gerani has designed eleven previous ***Star Wars*** sets for Topps, he describes this premium set as "the most original and breathtaking of the bunch."

Comics fans will be particularly fond of the set, since it features sixty illustrated cards by fifty comic creators; this subset, entitled *New Visions of Star Wars*, features full color illustrations by Al Williamson, Gil Kane, Sam Kieth, Dale Keown, Dave Stevens, Ken Steacy, and Brian Stelfreeze, whose stunning painting can be seen on this issue's ***CSN*** cover. Walt Simonson has created six etched-foil chase cards for the set.

"These artists have a real affinity for the ***Star Wars*** saga," project manager Sam Taggart said. "You can see it in the results."

In addition to the comics art, the series features three additional subsets. The first section provides a look at the main characters of the films, including Han Solo, Princess Leia, Luke Skywalker, and Darth Vader. The second section features a behind-the-scenes look at the design and special effects of ***Star Wars***; many of the photos on these cards have never been published previously. The final subset features the Art of ***Star Wars***, offering a look at the many posters, greeting cards, books, and other ***Star Wars*** illustrations that have seen print in the sixteen years since the series debuted.

Star Wars Galaxy Premium Trading Cards Series One, a 140-card series with six foil-etched chase cards and randomly inserted autograph cards, is scheduled for April release; the cards are priced at $1.25 per pack.

by Cliff Biggers

NeoClassical Geek Revival

The Geek's comic book is one of the most short-lived and notorious series from the 1960's. Often cited as an example of one of most offbeat comics ever created, The Geek vanished into comics limbo until Neil Gaiman resurrected him in the 1989 ***Swamp Thing Annual***, thereby proving that every character has unfulfilled potential, providing that someone can find a way to tap into it.

Drawing their inspiration from the revitalized Geek first presented in the pages of that four-year-old annual, writer Rachel Pollack and artist Michael Dalton Allred resurrect the Geek one again in the first ***Vertigo Visions*** book. According to DC's Patricia Jeres, "***Vertigo Visions*** is the new umbrella title for one-shot specials that put the Vertigo spin on the dark fringes of the DC Universe... ***The Geek*** is suffused with the deep characterization, creepy atmosphere, and bold irreverence that mark popular Vertigo projects like ***Enigma*** and ***Doom Patrol***..." ***Vertigo Visions: The Geek*** offers fans new insight into the character originally created by comics legend Joe Simon some twenty-five years ago.

The 64-page one-shot makes the innocent, naive Geek the target of the evil Dr. Abuse and his fellow Corruption Elementals. To destroy him, they tempt him with a string of self-destructive post-60's lifestyles, hoping to lead him to abandon his ideals and lose his soul.

The offbeat nature of ***Vertigo Visions: The Geek*** should be familiar territory for the book's writer and artist: Rachel Pollack is the current writer of the cutting-edge ***Doom Patrol*** series, while Michael Allred is the creator of the cult-favorite ***Madman*** series for Tundra.

Vertigo Visions: The Geek, a $3.95 one-shot scheduled for April 22nd release, features a painted cover by Allred and popular artist/writer Matt Wagner.

by Cliff Biggers

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From Your Friendly Neighborhood Comics Outlet
Printed on 100% Recycled Newsprint

Black Dogs May Leave Fans Dazed and Confused

In recent years, the comics field has seen an influx of impressive black talents offering a new perspective on life in America. Some of those talents have become mainstays of the superhero field—but not *Ho Che Anderson*, whose work drifts far afield from the superhero genre. In his latest work, ***Black Dogs***, Anderson offers comics readers a look at black urban life, offering readers a vision of modern life and its institutionalized racism that may leave readers a little bit confused about the America's supposed strides towards absolute racial equality.

Black Dogs, a 24-page black and white comic, focuses on the lives of a young black couple and their circle of friends; it is set against the backdrop of the post-Rodney King trial riots. The book also serves as a prelude for Anderson's next project, ***King***, a three-issue series featuring a look at *Martin Luther King*'s life and his work; this series is set to debut in May. According to ***Black Dogs***' publisher Fantagraphics, "***Black Dogs*** is a painful, contemporary reminder that Martin Luther King's groundbreaking battle for civil rights of the '60's is not yet finished, making King's life story all the more relevant to young people in the '90's." ***Black Dogs #1***, a $1.50 comic, is scheduled for March release.

A Rapid Decline

Barry Allen is back... but is the DC Universe ready? The kind, gentle, rational Barry Allen seems to have been replaced by a twisted, crazed, psychotic individual who expresses his frustrations by going on a rampage. It's up to the other super-swift inhabitants of the DC Universe to slow him down and contain him. Wally West is joined by Jay Garrick and Johnny Quick—but only Wally can decide if he wants to make use of the deadly secret he has uncovered. ***Flash #76***, a May 15th release, is written by *Mark Waid* and illustrated by *Greg LaRocque* and *Roy Richardson*.

IN THE YEAR 2099...
A LOT OF THINGS HAVE CHANGED. EVOLVED, SOME MIGHT SAY.
YET SOME THINGS REMAIN BLISSFULLY THE SAME.
YOU BETCHA!

Reptiles 2099

Dinosaurs For Hire has already targeted a number of comics concepts for spoofing in its pages; beginning with ***Dinosaurs For Hire #8***, though, the series adds a special back-up strip that Marvel fans should find particularly appealing. "Dinosaurs For Hire 2099," written by *Tom Mason* and illustrated by *Joel Thomas* and *Bruce McKorkindale*, pokes fun at all the Marvel 2099 books—and, as ***Dinosaurs For Hire*** fans have come to expect, manages to poke fun at much more than that. "I can't really talk too much about it," Mason said, "without giving away the storyline. Let's just say that fans of Marvel and Image Comics won't be disappointed. And neither will fans of ***Dinosaurs For Hire***!" Look for ***Dinosaurs For Hire #8***, a $1.95 comic, in mid-March.

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1963 Fashions

CSN told you all about 1963, the upcoming Image Comics series by *Alan Moore*, *Rick Veitch*, *Steve Bissette*, *Jim Valentino*, and others; this retro-series, creating a fictional comics line from an innovative (and imaginary) comics publisher in 1963, is sure to appeal to fans who know about the early days of Marvel Comics. To celebrate the debut of the first issue of ***1963, Mystery Incorporated,*** Graphitti Designs is offering a Mystery Incorporated T-Shirt featuring the full-color cover of ***1963 #1*** on one side and the slogan "1963 is coming" boldly emblazoned on the back. The shirts, priced at $15.95, will be released in April; be sure to let your local comic shop know that you're interested—and tell 'em you heard about it in ***CSN***...

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Topps COMICS
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BOMBAST
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TOGETHER AT LAST!
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#1 (OF 4)
COVER BY STEVE DITKO AND ART ADAMS
SHIPPING MAY
BY ROY THOMAS AND STEVE DITKO
PLUS!
HELL HAS NO ROOM FOR JACK KIRBY'S WILDEST HEROES!
SATAN'S SIX
#2 (OF 4)
BY TONY ISABELLA, JOHN CLEARY AND ARMANDO GIL
PLUS 36 NEW TRADING CARDS, INCLUDING SUPER HOT IMAGE COMICS ARTIST SAM KIETH'S INTERPRETATION OF FRIGHTFUL!
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EVERY 50 COPIES INITIALLY ORDERED OF ISSUE #2 GETS RETAILER A FULL UNCUT SHEET OF 24 KIRBY CHROME CARDS (6 SETS OF ALL 4 CARDS).
CONSUMERS PROMOTION
EVERY PURCHASE OF SATAN'S SIX #2 ENTITLES CONSUMERS TO ENTER A DRAWING FOR ONE OF 250 "24 UP" SHEETS.
SHIPPING IN MAY

STAR TREK
ANNUAL #4
LIEUTENANT SPOCK- ON HIS FIRST MISSION!
At the start of his career, Spock grapples with an unyielding evil, and his life is changed forever!
STAR TREK ANNUAL #4
on sale in March
Story by Michael Jan Friedman
Art by Gordon Purcell and Pablo Marcos
Also- watch for double-sized STAR TREK #50 coming in June!

Jurassic Park's Curators Announced

No one's saying too much about the details of ***Jurassic Park***, *Steven Spielberg*'s upcoming film based on *Michael Chrichton*'s hit novel; in fact, the secrecy surrounding the film is reminiscent of the secrecy associated with the 1989 film ***Batman***. At least three people know the whole story, though: *Walter Simonson*, *Gil Kane*, and *George Perez*—because they're the three creators chosen by Topps Comics to handle the honors on the comic-book miniseries.

Simonson, well known for his work on such comics as ***Thor, RoboCop Vs. Terminator***, and the original ***Alien*** adaptation, will script the adaptation. Gil Kane, one of the most respected artists in comics, will pencil the book; his pencils will be inked by George Perez, a prominent artist and long-time fan of Gil Kane.

According to Topps editor in chief *Jim Salicrup*, "Combining the extraordinary talents of Simonson, Kane, and Perez with a one-in-a-lifetime property such a ***Jurassic Park***, bodes well for this being one of the biggest comic book publishing events of 1993. Following in the footsteps of Topps' breakthrough comics adaptation of ***Bram Stoker's Dracula,*** we're dedicated to achieving both artistic and commercial success with ***Jurassic Park***."

Topps will ship each issue of ***Jurassic Park*** polybagged along with exclusive Topps trading cards. Three cards will be polybagged with each issue—one card featuring newly-created dinosaur art by Walt Simonson, one movie photo card, and one card reproducing Gil Kane's cover art. These twelve cards will not be a part of Topps regular ***Jurassic Park*** card series. ***Jurassic Park #1***, a $2.95 comic, is scheduled for June release; Topps will also offer a $2.50 newsstand edition of the comic sans cards, as well as a special ***Jurassic Park Movie Souvenir Magazine*** (also slated for June release).

It's Time for Blazing Comics!

If you picked up the first (and only) issue of Argosy's ***G-8 and His Battle Aces*** last year, you met Grun, the World War I German air ace known as "The Green Terror." While G-8's comics run was short-lived, Grun is making a return to comics this May in ***Time Warrior #1***, the debut title from Argosy's Blazing Comics imprint.

During a test run of The Time Dislocator, Grun repels an attack on Herr Doktor Krueger by the sinister team of Stahlmaske and Razorfist, but is accidentally catapulted through time himself, thereby becoming the Time Warrior. ***Time Warrior #1*** is illustrated by *Sam Glanzman*; *Tim Truman* supplies the cover art. The first issue will also present a new Web-Man story written by *Chuck Dixon*; Web-Man will be featured on the flip-cover of the $2.50 comic. ***Time Warrior #1*** will also contain a special celebration of G-8's 60th anniversary (like Doc Savage, G-8 was also created in 1933, making him older than any superhero comic).

MARVEL comics
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AVENGERS #363!
A 48-page dynamo with an outrageous all-foil cover!

WARLOCK AND THE INFINITY WATCH #17!
New character, Maxam, debuts!

WHAT IF? #50!
Wolvie, Hulk, 48 pages, and a foil-embossed cover. What more could you ask for?

MORBIUS #10!
Featuring two blood-chilling stories!

TROUBLE WITH GIRLS #1!
"Heavy Hitters" premiere with a cover embossed with metallic ink!

™ & © 1993 Conrad Jones & Wolf Jacobs

SILVER SURFER/WARLOCK: RESURRECTION #4!
Jim Starlin's gripping masterwork concludes!
Printed on Fanfare paper!

INCREDIBLE HULK #407!
Guest-starring Captain America!

Conan ™ & © 1993 Conan Properties

CONAN #269!
The explosive conclusion to "Conan the Renegade!"

A Change of Clothes For Wonder Man

After a while, you get tired of wearing the same clothes, right? Well, it's only logical that superheroes would feel the same way—which may be one reason why Wonder Man is getting a new costume in ***Wonder Man #88***. That's not the only thing that's eventful about this issue, though; it also features the first part of a four-issue revamping of the character that will culminate in ***Wonder Man #85*** this summer. Similar to what was done in the Darkhawk storyline that appeared in ***Darkhawk #81-85***, the covers of these four issues of ***Wonder Man*** will fit together to form one giant image. ***Wonder Man #88***, written by *Gerard Jones* and illustrated by *Jeff Johnson* (whose art you recently saw in ***Amazing Spider-Man #376***) and *Dan Panosian*, is scheduled for April 15th release.

Marvel Comics Shipping The Week Of April 20th

Give & Take

by Cliff Biggers & Brett Brooks

Each month, Cliff Biggers (in plain type) and Brett Brooks (*in italic type*) take a look at a few choice comics scheduled for release in the next few weeks. Publishers interested in having their books considered for review in this feature should send copies to ***CSN Give & Take, 2339 Milstead Circle, Marietta GA 30066.*** We'd prefer receiving copies of the books at least thirty days before they're scheduled to reach comic shops. Enough business—let's talk comics!

~MM. THE LAW, IT SEEMS, IS NO PROTECTION AGAINST NAUSEA AND D.S-ORIENTATION.
I TRUST YOU'LL DISPOSE OF SERGEANT ACKLAND'S UNDER-NOURISHED BODY IN THE MOST EFFICIENT MANNER, SOAMES. I SPOTTED SOME HUNGRY CATS ON MY WAY IN...
AS YOU WISH, SIR.
WHAT ARE YOUR IMMEDIATE PLANS?
NOW THAT I'M FREE, I INTEND TO PAY A VISIT TO AN OLD FRIEND...
SEVERAL OLD FRIENDS, IN FACT... BUT ONE IN PARTICULAR WHOSE TREACHERY DEMANDS MY IMMEDIATE ATTENTION.
GIVE 'EM WHAT FOR, SIR!
OH, I FULLY INTEND TO, SOAMES.
"WHAT FOR", INDEED.

Take a heaping helping of Oscar Wilde, add a generous amount of The Difference Engine, and let the ingredients simmer for a time in writer Grant Morrison's mind. Give Morrison the freedom to a dash of any other ingredients that come to mind. Put the ingredients in Steve Yeowell's talented hands. And there you have ***Sebastian O***; serves a whole bunch of eager Vertigo fans.

Sebastian O is one of those books that's much better in execution than any brief synopsis might indicate; that's fairly typical for Grant Morrison's work, because Morrison is a writer who packs his stories with a plethora of little touches that can't be synopsized.

Nevertheless, here's a basic rundown on the story: Sebastian O has been institutionalized by a conspiratorial Club that needs him removed from the picture. When Sebastian uses his wit to escape from the asylum, the members of the Club are concerned... and just a little bit frightened. Even in such a high-tension predicament, though, Sebastian never loses sight of the fact that he is a dandy first and foremost, a hedonist in whose company Oscar Wilde would have felt right at home.

One can't help but feel that Morrison had more than just a hint of Wilde in mind when he wrote ***Sebastian O****. Everything that surrounded Wilde is there with Sebastian, the daliances, the rumors, the wit, and of course, the manners.*

At its core, ***Sebastian O*** is a dramatic chase story in which the main character can survive only if he can think differently than his enemies expect. If that's all that it was, then I'd be warning you away from the book rather than recommending it; I find chase stories to be ultimately dissatisfying in comics unless there's a strong subplot as well.

As you might suspect, there is.

I'm a conspiracy buff; I am fascinated by the conspiratorial theories bandied about to explain away any number of historical events, and my ragged copy of ***It's A Conspiracy*** (a great compendium for those who want an overview of all the major conspiracy theories... but I digress...) has been loaned out more than any single book I've owned in the past five years. And ***Sebastian O*** is a book *steeped* in conspiracy; it's unclear in the first issue if even Sebastian O himself realizes just how complex this conspiracy is. Furthermore, Sebastian's priorities are such that gleaning the truth and exposing the conspiracies are far less important that dressing elegantly and looking properly dandified. It's that mindset that just may enable him to outwit those who want Sebastian O dead...

Okay, I was waiting for you to cover the conspiracy angle before I said very much about this book...I know how you love a conspiracy. I agree that it makes for a great subplot, but there was more to this book to enjoy than just that aspect. ***Sebastian O*** *lives in a world that is rife with character. As you mentioned, it borrows heavily from* **The Difference Engine***—where the first computer is invented in the Victorian Era—which creates something unique for a dandy to operate within. Most people don't think of the Victorian era as being highly technological, but the world of* ***Sebastian O*** *is, at least to the extent that there are flying machines—very similar to gyroscopes—at the same time that the motion picture is being unveiled. There is a strange anomaly to* ***Sebastian O*** *that made me read it again just to pick up on all of the subtle background material.*

So, I will agree that it is the conspiracy that compels the plot—but it seems that the setting compels the characters. Without the addition of the primitive-advanced technology, this would be something more akin to an Oscar Wilde Sherlock Holmes story; as much as I enjoy Sherlock Holmes, I've seen it before, this however is something new.

Steve Yeowell, whose artwork was so satisfying in the Epic graphic novel ***67 Seconds***, turns in another superb job here; his sense of the graphic is stark and fluid, reminiscent at times of Alex Toth. He obviously has spent some time into researching Victorian settings; he captures the Victorian touch quite well in dozens of subtle ways. As was the case with ***67 Seconds***, though, the best compliment I can pay

MINI MENTIONS

MARVEL COMICS

ALPHA FLIGHT #120

Celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of Alpha Flight with a head-banging showdown with the Hardliners. #120 is an important issue for regular fans, and a perfect place to start following the Flight if you're not. The special polybagged issue features an 11" x 17" poster announcing the Canadian Mutant Powers Registration Act, legislation that will complicate Alpha Flight's mission drastically. Plus the issue includes an Alpha pinup you won't want to miss.

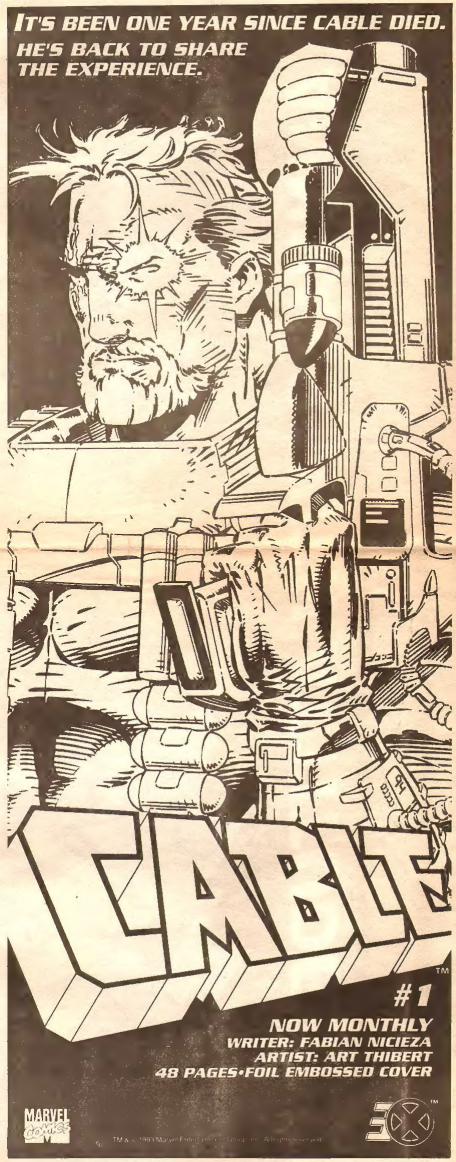
AVENGERS WEST COAST #94

WAR MACHINE GOES NUTS ON DR. DEMONICUS!

With Wonder Man no longer in the team, War Machine joins to add a little mechanical muscle--whether the Avengers West Coast likes it or not. All this, and Dr. Demonicus strikes. Written by Roy Thomas, Avengers West Coast boasts the fan fave art team of Dave Ross and Tim Dzon. If you haven't checked out Avengers West Coast recently, your missing history in the making.

FIRST FLIGHT OF THE VULTURE!

From the Underground he came. Now he flies above it--The Vulture. Looks like the Spider-Man in 2099 doesn't have much of a future. Written by Peter David with art by Rick Leonardi and Al Williamson--the excitement will have you climbing the walls for issue eight.



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- CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL #12
- NEW WARRIORS ANNUAL #3
- X-FACTOR ANNUAL #6
- AVENGERS ANNUAL #22

APRIL:

- WEB OF SPIDERMAN ANNUAL #9
- DOCTOR STRANGE ANNUAL #3
- UNCANNY X-MEN ANNUAL #17
- FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL #26

MAY:

- DARKHAWK ANNUAL #2
- WONDERMAN ANNUAL #2
- NAMOR ANNUAL #3
- DAREDEVIL ANNUAL #9

JUNE:

- HULK ANNUAL #19
- THOR ANUAL #18
- IRON MAN ANNUAL #14
- PUNISHER WAR ZONE ANNUAL #1
- GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY ANNUAL #3

JULY:

- EXCALIBUR ANNUAL #1
- SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL #13
- AVENGERS WEST COAST ANNUAL #8
- GHOST RIDER ANNUAL #1

AUGUST:

- SILVER SURFER ANNUAL #6
- X-MEN ANNUAL #2
- PUNISHER ANNUAL #6
- DEATHLOK ANNUAL #2
- X-FORCE ANNUAL #2

ANNUALS WITH ATTITUDE !

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SPIDER-MAN 2099 #7

FIRST FLIGHT OF THE VULTURE!

From the Underground he came. Now he flies above it--The Vulture. Looks like the Spider-Man in 2099 doesn't have much of a future. Written by Peter David with art by Rick Leonardi and Al Williamson--the excitement will have you climbing the walls for issue eight.

Lawdog
THIS BUNCH SHOULDN'T BE HERE.
THEY'RE ALL WRONG. OUT OF PLACE.
NO WAY OF TELLING HOW THEY GOT HERE OR HOW THEY CAN GET BACK.
Shane A Henry

Steve Yeowell is that his art perfectly complements a superlative script.

Fans who have been a bit put off by the convoluted supernatural nature of ***Sandman*** or the schizophrenic complexities of ***Shade the Changing Man*** will find ***Sebastian O*** much more accessible; fans who enjoy other Vertigo titles will be thrilled with the sophisticated speculative plot, set in a Victorian England in which computers have been used for years, leading to a strangely high-tech Victorian setting. It's a thinking fan's book and a delight to read.

There are a lot of people who complain about the violent nature of comics, and how that tendency is going to lead us away from the wholesome nature of true morality. Which is exactly what the main character in ***Lawdog*** *is hoping for. Of course, in his case this would be a good thing...*

In the world of ***Lawdog****, everything has gone to Hell—literally. The world as we understand it doesn't exist, and has been replaced with a world in which carrying a Bible is a death sentence, and where wearing a cross is an excuse for human sacrifice. It isn't the world we know that has been destroyed, but another world that is standing in its place, and it's a frightening place to visit... so just forget about living there.*

Lawdog *is the first title in the new Heavy Hitters line from Marvel's Epic comics line. Heavy Hitters is designed to offer a slightly more mature—and definitely more harsh—view of comics and storytelling in general; that's describes Lawdog exactly. Written by veteran grit writer Chuck Dixon, and illustrated by the always dirty Flint Henry,* ***Lawdog*** *comes across as a very dark and street-*

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AND KEEP WATCHING BATMAN WEEKDAY AFTERNOONS AND SUNDAYS ON FOX!
FOX KIDS NETWORK

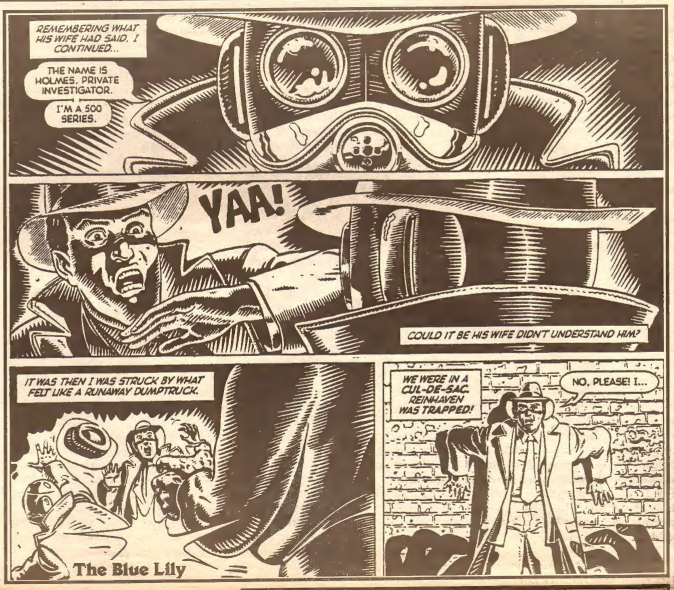
smart book, with more than just a touch of the surreal. Have I mentioned that the book was somewhat gritty?

Anyone who ever enjoyed ***Grimjack*** should find themselves right at home in ***Lawdog;*** Dixon is capturing the hard-hitting action feel of that series, and of course Henry's art is similar to his work on that late, lamented title. If we can't have ***Grimjack*** back again, I'll certainly settle for ***Lawdog;*** it's not an imitation in concept, but in tone and style it's so familiar that I feel right at home after just a few pages.

Lawdog *is the story of life on the road. The unfortunate part is that no one is sure exactly which road they're on, not even the Lawdog character. What we do know is that the road is taking the Lawdog and his rather obnoxious and unwanted hitch-hiker companion on a trip to a town called Gehenna, and believe me, it's everything that it's cracked up to be. Somehow, the Darkman (that's the Lawdog's name) is able to travel a road that isn't from place to place, but more from what to what; he is travelling between realities trying to fulfill some form of mission or task, only he doesn't quite know where he is, or what he is doing.*

The biggest difference here is that in ***Grimjack,*** everyone was blasé about the strange world in which they lived; in ***Lawdog,*** it's obvious that many of the characters are in territory as unfamiliar to them as it is to us.

Dixon has crafted a very rich and compelling tale in ***Lawdog****. If you get past the surface grime, you will find underneath a very thought-provoking story that parallels—sometimes too closely—the realities that we face in our own world. The land of Gehenna is easy to get lost in, with all of its perverse twists and*


REMEMBERING WHAT HIS WIFE HAD SAID, I CONTINUED...
THE NAME IS HOLMES. PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR.
I'M A 500 SERIES.
YAA!
COULD IT BE HIS WIFE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND HIM?
IT WAS THEN I WAS STRUCK BY WHAT FELT LIKE A RUNAWAY DUMPTRUCK.
WE WERE IN A CUL-DE-SAC. REINHAVEN WAS TRAPPED!
NO, PLEASE! I...
The Blue Lily

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odd distortions of what we would consider normal. Even the idea of crime has been taken and turned around into something that we aren't sure we understand anymore. What Dixon has done perhaps better than anything else in this book is make us feel as bufeeted about as Lina—Lawdog's obnoxious hitch-hiker friend—as she finds herself without a clue as to where she is and what she has done wrong; she gets arrested for being, in her words, a "lapsed baptist."

Flint Henry is an ideal choice for an artist on this book. Henry, best known for his wonderful work on the already-mentioned ***Grimjack****, brings all of his dark detail into this world, and helps bring a sense of reality to something that could easily come across as very unreal. Henry's ability to make what most would consider a very un-natural occurrence seem like an everyday event is a credit to his talent as an artist.*

Henry is an artist who really shines on this sort of material; unlike many artists working in comics today, he'd be out of his element with a standard superhero story.

And through all of the mire that is collected, despite all of the confusion that occurs, and beyond the warped reality of what transpires, you are given a sense that something very deliberate is happening. ***Lawdog*** *is not an easy book to explain—especially if you want to do so without trying to offend anyone—but let me say that it is something that is worth checking out. It isn't for everyone, and some people are likely to hate it, but if you are a fan of somewhat controversial books that are very well done, check out* ***Lawdog****.*

"Sex * Violence * Epistemology." So Dark Horse tags *The Blue Lily*, the new four-issue limited series by Angus McKie. It's a valid tag, since the existential and metaphysical meanderings flow hard and heavy in the first few pages of the book. That's a little bit of a shame, too, because fans who flip through the first few pages and see little in the way of action will miss out on a very clever blend of philosophy and Raymond Chandleresque *noir* by the time the story hits its stride a dozen or so pages into the book.

The Blue Lily is the story of a hardboiled (hardcast?) robot detective who possesses more intelligence and insight than most people in the story. He's called in on a rather mysterious case by a woman who seems somehow alienated from the upper strata of society in which she operates; her husband is in trouble and needs help. From there, the story has as enough twists to stand comfortably alongside ***Chinatown*** or ***The Big Sleep***—and enough tough-guy Chandleresque dialogue to earn the book a place on a mystery fan's shelf.

Strange you should mention ***Chinatown****. While I can certainly understand how a complex* film-noir *adventure could spark comparisons, I still find it strange that while reading the book I thought of the film* ***Chinatown*** *also. Not just in the "kind of like" sense, but in a very definite, "this is* ***Chinatown****" sense. It makes me wonder if there's something going on here...*

On another level, how did you manage to find so many books that fit into your particular niche this month? First a conspiracy, and then a hard-boiled detective story—it's like you have taken control of what is being produced and...hey, wait a second. I wanna see a lawyer.

What can I say? My tastes in reading material have always been a bit ahead of the crowd... Seriously, it is always nice to find a comics creator who obviously enjoys the same sort of fiction that I enjoy—and there's no doubt that Angus McKie enjoys hardboiled detective material, because he's too familiar with the genre to be a casual reader.

The Blue Lily was a lot of fun—and a lot of reading. In a time when an average comic is read in under two minutes, this comprises a lot of text and thought. Like so many truly good comics, it is easy to see how this might just as easily have been a novel or a film—and still might be.

How can I describe Angus McKie's artwork? McKie refuses to fit into a single style; his work is sometimes dead serious, at other times cartoony—it's as if Dave Gibbons and Charles Burns decided to collaborate. It works, though, and that's what matters; McKie the artist knows when McKie the writer needs a dramatic illustrative touch and when he needs a lighter, more cartoony approach.

The Blue Lily certainly isn't a book that will appeal to superhero fans; in fact, it's a book that sometimes seems to struggle to be a bit more complex than its readers. As a result, you're likely to suspect that, no matter how much of this book you get, you're still missing a few little bits here and there. And you know... you may be right!

There's plenty here to entertain, though—and it's nice to see someone approach Chanderesque mystery without resorting to slavish pastiche.

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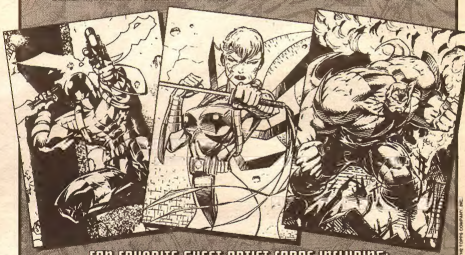

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